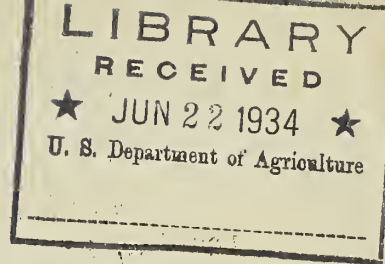


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Vitamins and Home-Canned Foods

Broadcast by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, National Farm and Home Hour, Thursday, June 14, 1934.

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MR. SALISBURY: Well, Miss Van Deman, what's on your Household Calendar today?

MISS VAN DEMAN: So many things I hardly know which to talk about first. People are asking more questions this year than ever about home canning and the home preservation of foods in all kinds of ways.

But, Mr. Salisbury, before I get down to serious topics, let me give you this message from a lady in Texas. Her letter says: "Please tell Mr. Salisbury that I certainly appreciate his pronouncement in favor of the biscuit-dough shortcake."

MR. SALISBURY: Thank you. I'm glad to know that Texas is with me.

MISS VAN DEMAN: If you aren't careful, Mr. Salisbury, you're going to find yourself elected President of the Society for the Perpetuation of Biscuit-dough Shortcake.

MR. SALISBURY: All right. I can take it.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Oh, I don't doubt that.

Now to come back to the canning questions. A lot of rumors are floating around to the effect that home-canning makes fruits and vegetables lose their minerals and vitamins. I wonder sometimes whether we aren't getting almost jittery about these vitamins. We act as though we had to get every vitamin from every food in every meal every day. But of course a statement like that does make you stop and think, especially if you're planning to put up a lot of nice fruits and vegetables from your garden to tide you over next winter. So let me say this much right now, don't give up your canning plans. Go ahead with them. Only here are some of the things to watch out for if you want to keep the most food value in your canned products. They are suggestions from Dr. Hazel Munsell on the nutrition side and from Mabel Stienbarger on the practical canning side.

They both say there's no reason why home-canned foods should lose much, if any, of their minerals if you follow this plan. Hot-pack your fruits and vegetables and fill up the cans with the liquid in which you precooked the food. Then when you serve the canned food, use juice and all. That way you conserve the minerals. But of course no matter how you do your canning, you are bound to lose whatever calcium or other minerals are dissolved in the juice, if you open up a can of snap beans, for instance, drain off and throw away the liquid.

The answer on vitamins isn't so simple. Of the six now listed and named A, B, C, and so forth, no two behave exactly alike when they meet a combination of water, heat, and air, as they do in cooking and canning. Water dissolves some. Heat, that is long-continued heat, has a bad effect on several. And the oxygen in air destroys others, especially when the food is hot.

Vitamin C is the most sensitive of all, and since fruits and vegetables are the best sources of vitamin C we know, it's easy to understand why some of these scare statements about loss of vitamins got started. The two star exceptions are tomatoes and grapefruit. They are exceptionally rich in vitamin C to begin with and their acidity protects this store of vitamin C even during canning.

Fortunately, the methods of canning that are safest and best to follow for other reasons, also help to conserve the vitamins. For instance, here are two things you can do:

First. Can fruits and vegetables as soon as possible after you bring them from your garden. If you let them stand around even in a refrigerator, they lose some of their vitamin value.

Second. Use the hot-pack method and work fast. The short precook before you put the food in the cans, drives the air out of the tissues, and, as I said a moment ago, air has a bad effect on vitamins. Also, the hot-pack makes it possible to shorten the time the food has to stay in the water bath or the steam pressure canner to process.

Many of the big commercial canning plants are taking special precautions to protect the vitamins in their products. This is fine and all to the good. You can't expect to duplicate some of these commercial methods in the home. But no need to let them give you an inferiority complex about your good home-canned fruits and vegetables. Besides many of these vitamin questions are too unsettled. When you talk to the people who know the most about them they are the first ones to tell you that. Also, remember that many of the foods you depend on most for vitamins never go into cans. If you like, I'll send you a list of vitamin-rich foods and also our directions for canning fruits and vegetables at home. Just write to me at the U. S. Bureau of Home Economics, Washington.